



NASS

New England Agricultural Statistics Service

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USDA ANNUAL TREE FRUIT INQUIRY

As the 2000 fruit harvesting season draws to a close, it is once again time to measure the production of apples, peaches and pears in the New England states. The New England Agricultural Statistics Service is responsible for conducting this annual survey of tree fruit producers within the region. Grower response to this survey will update earlier production forecasts for apples in all six states, peaches in Connecticut and Massachusetts and pears in Connecticut. It will also establish the production figures to be used by the fruit industry until utilization and price estimates are available in July 2000.

In mid-October, apple, peach and pear producers nationwide will be asked to provide total production, and preliminary price information for the 2000 crop. Here in New England, questionnaires will be mailed directly to approximately 800 tree fruit producers. If necessary, interviewers will follow-up with telephone or personal contacts through the middle of November. Response to the survey is voluntary, however cooperation from all growers is essential to provide an accurate picture of the tree fruit industry in this region. **Individual reports are kept strictly confidential**, exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, and used only with other reports for statistical purposes.

Based on grower responses to the Fruit Inquiry conducted in late July, 2000 total apple production in New England is expected to total 4.61 million bushels (42-pound units), 28 percent below the 1999 crop. New England orchards reached full bloom by mid-May. Cool and wet weather throughout the end of May and the beginning of June provided unfavorable conditions for pollination and by mid-June growers were already concerned. The poor pollination conditions led to an overall average fruit set. Wet weather continued through June and July, with outbreaks of scab reported in all areas. Hail damage was reported throughout the area, and some northern New England operations reported total losses for the year. With little relief from the wet conditions, the weather continued to take it's toll on orchards. As of mid-September, the 2000 apple crop was rated in good to fair condition by area crop specialists, with fruit size generally average. The 2000 Connecticut pear crop was forecast at 1,200 tons as of late July, 14 percent above the previous year's output. Peach growers in Connecticut and Massachusetts were contacted July 1 to forecast the size of the 2000 peach crop. Based on their responses at that time, production was expected to total 90,000 bushels (48-pound units), 2 percent more than in 1999.

The national survey results are available in the *Non-Citrus Fruit and Nuts, Annual* report from Washington, DC in January 2001. All reports are available on the Internet within a few minutes of the scheduled release time. New England statistics are re-printed in the January issue of the *Ag Review*. The monthly New England *Ag Review* is also available on the Internet monthly, but complimentary copies can be mailed to survey participants upon request.

[The New England Agricultural Statistics Service is a field office of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. It is located in Concord, NH, and is responsible for agricultural statistics in all six states in the region. The office can be reached at 1-800-642-9571 or through E-Mail at NASS-NH@NASS.USDA.GOV. All national statistics and state level newsletters are available through free E-mail subscriptions and on the Internet at <http://www.usda.gov/nass/>.]

For More Information Contact: Angie Coate or Aubrey Davis at 1-800-642-9571.